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# Competent Intercultural Communication as Defined T

Elyssa Smith

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Competent Intercultural Communication as Defined Through  
Study Abroad Students' Lived Experiences

Elyssa Smith

Department of Communication  
Dr. David Boromisza-Habashi

Department of Communication  
Dr. Cindy H. White

Department of Sociology  
Dr. Leslie Irvine

Spring 2011

### Abstract

This research project will examine beliefs underlying scholar's measures of intercultural communication competence (ICC) and how they match up to students own ideas of their ICC based on their study abroad experience. Past research has explored ways of measuring ICC. Scholars have focused on how to assess the impact of study abroad on ICC by employing different scales of measurement. All of these scales seem to represent a similar view of competency, a view that misses the cultural aspect and role of communication that I argue cannot be left out when defining competent intercultural communication (CIC). In order to reveal a better understanding of CIC, I collected data through interviews with 15 study abroad students. The data I collected was obtained through in-depth interviews lasting no longer than 30 minutes. Data was based on interview questions about students' study abroad experiences and their own description of these experiences. From the collected data of interviewees' responses, terms for talk (TFTs) were identified as a way to explicitly reveal students' understandings of CIC and to get at the cultural and communicative aspect of CIC which scholars leave out of their measurements. Analysis of the data showed when students used TFTs in their experiences to define CIC, they were also using these TFTs to reveal messages about personhood, society, and the communication itself. In these salient messages within TFTs, my data revealed that students understand CIC as work on the self through communicating in interactions rather than using skills to accomplish competency as claimed by abstract measures of ICC. Therefore CIC is not about acquiring specific skills but rather about the use of communication in working on the self to become open to differences in our world.

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## **Chapter 1: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

Many students decide to study abroad to gain experience outside of their own culture. Once I returned to America, after spending a semester abroad in Florence, Italy, I began to notice a change in my views and perspectives. After I became aware of these changes, I started to think about how the views and perspectives I had valued my entire life changed in the length of a semester. The first time I remember encountering a situation in which my ideas about proper conduct were challenged occurred in a restaurant in Florence. My roommate and I were out to dinner with some friends at a local restaurant near our apartment. We had eaten three courses and were coming to the end of our meal. The waitress cleared our dishes and asked us if we wanted dessert. As we politely refused, we expected her to get our check so we could pay and leave the restaurant. Instead we stayed at our table for another hour wondering why our waitress was not expecting us to leave. We finally directly asked our waitress for the check, and she took her time and was in no rush to get it for us. My friends and I realized we had encountered one of our first experiences in a misunderstanding due to separate cultural beliefs. We began to catch on to the concept of a “relaxed atmosphere” and the importance Italians place on enjoying a meal.

My restaurant experience was an example of a difference in understanding due to discrepant cultural practices. This process of expecting something based on our own cultural notions and being faced with something different challenges our thinking. I wanted to understand how we make sense of what happens when we are faced with ideas or perspectives that fall outside our cultural norms of communication. My experience also highlights the importance of the effect of actual episodes of communication on the formation of intercultural experiences, including the experience of competent intercultural communication (CIC).

This research project will examine beliefs underlying scholars' measures of intercultural communication competence (ICC) and how they match up to students' ideas of their own CIC. In this chapter I will first describe how scholars measure ICC through the use of scales, and how the scales themselves represent a standard that is embedded with cultural bias and assumptions. The abstract nature of these scales, I argue, may not reflect students' own interpretations of ICC because they ignore students' interactions and assume communication is not important in measuring competency. I will then argue for the use of Carbaugh's (2007) method of Cultural Discourse Analysis particularly using the terms for talk framework (Carbaugh, 1989) as a way to uncover how students who study abroad make sense of CIC based on their lived experiences, using key terms for communicative practice. A cultural approach to viewing communication is important because such an approach is best suited to explore students' own perspective on their own communication practices, a perspective which I contend is shaped by cultural assumptions about communication in general and intercultural communication in particular. Students use their own cultural notions as a way to understand and foster competent communication while partaking in intercultural communication. Finally I will provide examples of past studies which use terms for talk from a cultural perspective.

Past research in the area of study abroad has explored ways of measuring the Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) of individuals. I take issue with these studies on two accounts. First, such research fails to systematically represent students' own experience of intercultural communication competence (and incompetence) as an experience, born in the process of intercultural communication and in the process of making sense of particular intercultural communicative encounters. Second by treating communication as a transparent,

non-problematic process and by focusing on individuals and their abilities, they themselves exhibit cultural bias.

Scholars have focused on how to assess the impact of study abroad on ICC by employing different scales of measurement; however, these measurements confine ICC within a specific standard that has been conceived apart from students' lived experiences. In the end, all of the measures represent and reflect a similar view of ICC. Scholars view ICC as a combination of how students think, form their sense of self, and relate to others in intercultural encounters. ICC, according to these scholars, can be measured and evaluated through the three domains of cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal elements. The three elements are then used to see how they relate to the formation of students' intercultural proficiency and global mindedness. The use of scales as a measure of competence does not take into consideration the intercultural communication processes, those very processes in which students experience intercultural competence or incompetence and how students make sense of these processes on their own terms. Such studies present an idealized form of the intercultural experience without paying much attention to how students understand and make sense of their interactions. In this way, scale measures present an abstract view of a students' competence.

These abstract scales may not reflect students' own interpretations accurately because they are shaped by assumptions about the act and significance of communication. The scales I review below assume that communication is a transparent, non-problematic process, and that the competent individual can exercise complete control over the process. Students' sense making of CIC happens within the interactions with people from other cultural backgrounds. I will show that their own perspective is cultural in the way they use their own cultural understandings to understand and foster competent communication. Although this is not the focus of my study, I

will argue that understanding how U.S. American study abroad students understand their own competence has important implications for future studies of intercultural communication.

Difference in how American students and their conversational partners understand CIC may significantly effect how intercultural communication encounters unfold.

I don't assume ICC scales represent students' experiences inaccurately. My study sets out to investigate *whether* these scales accurately represent students' lived experiences. I collected American students' accounts of moments when they felt competent (or non-competent) communication occurred between them and someone of another culture. In my research I will use cultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 2007) to find out how students come to make sense of an intercultural interaction as competent. It is important to focus on the cultural aspect of communication because students' perspective on competent communication is found to be cultural in the way they use their own cultural notions to understand a foster competent communication. The ethnography of communication view is well suited to capture local, cultural views of communication. Using this approach allows us to focus on the communication and interactions through a cultural lens, and to evaluate the degree to which abstract scales represent students' views. In order to uncover cultural meaning my research looked at students' own descriptions of what happens in CIC.

### **Scholar's View of Intercultural Communication Competence**

Scholars have sought to measure ICC through the use of scales. Each scale has a different name and approaches how to measure competency in a different way. The abstract and confining nature of these scales however can be found through their similar view on how to measure competency. These scales used to measure competency of study abroad students are the



Global Mindedness Scale, Study Abroad Global Scale, and the Reflective Model of Intercultural Competence.

The Global Mindedness Scale (Braskamp, 2009) measures intercultural competence on a 30-item scale composed of five elements. These elements include responsibility, cultural pluralism, efficacy, global centrism, and interconnectedness. All of the elements represent “tolerance and respect for others” as an important elements of personal development. In this way the scale seeks to measure individuals as interculturally competent by gauging their ability to understand different viewpoints, accept them as dissimilar to their own, and use their skills to adapt to these different ways of thinking. Clarke (2009) suggests students should measure their ICC based on five components of global mindedness, all of which reflect changed attitudes/beliefs. Results from this scale define study abroad students as more likely to have higher levels of intercultural proficiency based on the fact that they had an increased openness to cultural diversity and are more globally minded. Both Braskamp’s and Clarke’s scales focus their evaluations on the individuals and how they were able to communicate competently. By placing the emphasis on the individual they are assuming communication with others is a transparent process.

The Study Abroad Global Scale created by Kitsantas (2004) is also based on the idea of global understanding and awareness but incorporates the idea of cross-cultural skills. ICC, according to this scale, is measurable through cross-cultural skills and global understanding/awareness. Cross cultural skills are skills that allow a person adapt to, understand, and accept ideas and values of another culture. Global understanding and awareness suggests a person is able to see many separate views and become aware of them. Results of this study go further to suggest that students’ goals for studying abroad were correlated with the development

of their intercultural communication skills. These results were measured by correlating student's goals with their measured cross-cultural skills and global awareness.

Scholars also turn to these scales to measure ICC based on a students' individual learning and development of skills. According to Braskamp (2009), it is important to use standard measurements to assess how students think, form a sense of themselves, and relate to others. Scholars use the three domains on a scale of cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills, in an effort to assess multiple understanding and levels of learning of these students. The first domain of the scale used to evaluate ICC is cognitive development, which focuses on understanding and awareness. Second is intrapersonal development measured through aspects of identity and emotional effect of the study abroad experience. The last domain measures interpersonal development in the areas of social interaction and increased social responsibility. Results from this study also suggest ICC comes from increased development of skills in the three measurable areas of the scale.

The Reflective Model of Intercultural Competence created by Williams (2005) also seeks to use the three domains to measure students' ICC. She takes a different approach to measurement by "encouraging students to consider their experience in broad terms, providing them with meaningful ways to articulate their experience to others"(Williams, 2005, p. 289). Williams suggests the three domains of measurement give students a base to reflect on changes to the self, based on the development of new attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs. In this way students assign a measurable value to their increased understanding of international and cultural issues. The results of this scale reveal, by thinking about their experience in terms of the three domains of measurement, students are able to evaluate their intercultural competency (Williams, 2005). By measuring their awareness and reflectiveness, students are only thinking about their

competence as an individual and ignoring the possibility of competence happening as a result of the communication in their interactions and experiences.

Although these scholars assign different names and terms to their measurements of ICC, they all seem to agree upon the same view in defining ICC. ICC reflects how students think, form their sense of self, and relate to others in intercultural encounters. It is evaluated through three domains of *cognitive development* based upon knowledge and awareness, *intrapersonal development* with attention to student's emotion, flexibility and open mindedness, and *interpersonal development* with attention given to student's increased social responsibility and critical thinking skills. According to these scholars studying abroad increases intercultural proficiency and global mindedness on the basis of the three domains. Yet the use of scales to evaluate students study abroad experiences can be seen as problematic. Scholars focus their studies to present a standard form of the intercultural experience without systematically studying students' actual experiences. The scales fail to understand students' ideas of competence that are formed through and in the interactions they have with cultural others.

### **Approaching ICC from a Cultural Perspective**

Scholars' views of ICC represent an idealized way of thinking about intercultural competence. However, when we look at study abroad students' experiences with intercultural communication from a cultural perspective, new ways of assessing CIC emerge. A cultural perspective provides a way look at students' understanding and sense making that happens through their experiences in intercultural interactions. In this way, attention must be paid to students' sense making and understanding of CIC as it is shaped by their own cultural notions and beliefs. In order to get close to the students' perspective, researchers need to be able to trace these meanings and messages in the way they talk about communication competence. Since

students' ideas about CIC happen through their actual experiences, having them explain their actual experiences will give us insight about how they come to understand CIC while they are abroad. In what follows, I will discuss examples of past research that has looked at sense making from a cultural perspective in an effort to illustrate the beliefs shared by a community. These studies will help to show the impact cultural beliefs have on the way people understand and make sense of intercultural interactions.

Katriel and Philipsen (1981) believe communication between people is a culturally distinct concept and experience. Different cultures have separate ideals and definitions of positive or good communication. Their study focused on analyzing several cultural texts obtained from studies of the lives of two American women. The idea of communication as work necessary “ for self definition and interpersonal bonding was then further analyzed as it happened when put into practice on a popular daily American television show” (p. 101). The discourse of these two women about the act of communication was used to illustrate how cultural beliefs are fundamental to Americans in their understanding of positive communication. According to Katriel and Philipsen, the U.S. notion of communication is based upon the idea of communication as skill and work. Their findings reveal, in American society, we use communication to solve personal and interpersonal problems. Americans believe talk needs to be efficient, and the point of talk is to solve personal and interpersonal problems (Katriel & Philipsen, 1981). In this way, Katriel and Philipsen were able to separate American talk into contrasting two categories, mere talk and the discussion of interpersonal life. Mere talk is seen as distant, neutral, and based on a set of conventions, while interpersonal talk occurs when a person communicates in order to be close, supportive, and listen to others. Communication therefore functions as discussion of our interpersonal lives as related to the self and relationships,

suggesting we communicate in order to be a part of society. All of these cultural beliefs surrounding communication display the American view of communication as the way to become established in our society. Positive or good communication, according to the American view serves interpersonal purposes. Culturally, Americans view communication as having an interpersonal function and agree it is something that can be worked on; the way to do this is through practice. Overall, their study used the concept of positive communication as a way to uncover how Americans understand this concept through their cultural beliefs.

Another research project focused on the cultural meaning of communication is work by Wilkins (2005) done in Finland surrounding the use of the term *asialinnen*. This term refers to optimal form through matter of fact talk. *Asialinnen* was used as a way to view how Finns define and understand optimal form in public and civic settings. The focus of Wilkins' case study was to uncover the process by which people come to form and share these ideas as a standard practice of communication. According to Wilkins, "As persons participate in any given setting, they may designate some communicative behaviors as either inadequate or excessive for the task at hand. This standardizing process is discussed as an optimal form of communication"(p.12). By analyzing shortcomings in optimal forms of public speech in Finn culture he was able to provide insight about how cultural beliefs are held within persons, relationships and their communication. The first element Wilkins studied were actions the Finns saw as an interruption the speaker in a public or civil setting. Based on his observations, Finns interpreted the American standard of direct eye contact as a disruption and distraction to the speaker. They believed instead the optimal *asiallinen* required a diverted gaze. The second aspect of *asiallinen* revealed Finns as valuing persons who limit their spoken contributions; this demonstrates the ability to concentrate through reflecting, thinking, and forethought. Finns place importance on silence

when observing public speech causing them to see of the American practice of answering quickly as indicating a lack of concentration toward the speaker. The last aspect evaluated restriction of facial movements of a speaker. Finns' idea of maintaining a fixed position suggests the person is in control of their emotional state. When Finns were shown pictures of American political figures in public settings, they understood the expressions as trying to please and court favor by being too excessive which lead them to negatively evaluate the seriousness of American public figures. In the end, through the use of these three elements in comparing the cultural idea of *asiallinen* as an optimal form, Wilkins was able to uncover the process by which shared understanding of meanings behind messages become valid for people in the community. This idea of shared understanding can also be applied to labels in everyday speech.

A case study analyzing the term “brown nosing” as a cultural category of American organizational life reveals how cultural understandings of labels shape our everyday speech (Hall & Valde, 2005). Labels are created and recreated in everyday talk and serve to enable or constrain interactions among people. Common sense is used in a cultural community to manage and make sense of our views on what is appropriate, valued and believed to be happen in that particular practice of communication (Carbaugh, 2007). According to this study, Americans in organizational workplaces understand a “brown noser” as a person who seeks rewards through social activities which are not associated with the job. Labeling a person a “brown noser” causes others to interpret their actions as selfish and artificial. Once they are labeled as such they will always be seen as having selfish or artificial intentions. Therefore, the meaning of brown nosing provides insight on cultural assumptions about American organizational life. The shared understanding of the term “brown nosing” reveals the American cultural idea of work and social activities as separate things that should be treated as such. This understanding of “brown nosing”

reveals values and beliefs about how people should interact in the workplace. In American organizational life, rewards should be given for the production of work as opposed to seeking them through other means (Hall & Valde, 1995). Understanding of the term “brown nosing” gives us insight into American organizational life-assumptions around “appropriate behavior and relationships within organizations” (p. 417). Analyses of the term “brown nosing” allowed Hall and Valde (1995) to uncover the importance of cultural beliefs that shape a shared communicative understanding for people at work. These shared understandings are important because they constitute the norms within that particular community.

Norms can reveal why a culture deems something as important enough to be commonly shared among the people of the community (Carbaugh, 1989). Hall and Noguchi (1995) used the two elements of semantic dimensions and norms to uncover reasons for misunderstandings in Japanese and American interpersonal relationships. Using the Japanese word *kenson*, as a comparison to the notion of modesty in American culture, they were able to demonstrate the types of interactions we engage in during everyday talk hold different meanings according to our own cultural practice of communication.

Americans understand the term modesty within discourse with emphasis on the individual. The purpose of enacting modesty is to protect individuals from negative reactions seen as showing off. The Japanese, on the other hand, understand the term *kenson* with emphasis on the interactions among others. In this way the Japanese see *kenson* as an “alliance.” It is a relational act that can have consequences because joint production is required. *Kenson* is a ritualized form of interaction for the Japanese as “a sequence of symbolic acts which when performed correctly pay homage to some object”(p. 1139). Hall and Noguchi (1995) suggest differences in understanding of two similar terms are apparent due to the norms and semantic

dimensions that are separately shared by each of these communities. Americans view the notion of polite refusal within interpersonal communication as useful in saving face. Saving face is accomplished through modesty as a norm in American society. Americans value the idea of saving face based on institutional and personal beliefs. The Japanese practice of *kenson* however values an opposite set of ideas as a norm. For the Japanese the concept of a direct refusal in an interpersonal interaction is the norm and they expect for it to occur. An example of the ritualized practice of direct refusal in *kenson* can be seen through the account below (Hall & Noguchi, 1995, p. 1138):

1. A: I want you to help to organize my essay
2. B: No!
3. (laugh) I am not a person who can give you
4. advice because I haven't passed the English
5. Proficiency Exam yet
6. A: (laugh) But you are taking one of English
7. classes aren't you? English class!
8. No! It has

In this exchange A is asking for B's help on their writing project. In the interaction B responds with a direct "no" however she follows it with laughter and explains why she cannot help to "soften the negative response, in a way that does not eclipse it" (p. 1139). By immediately responding with a direct refusal in this case, "No!" to A's request, B is preventing herself from looking superior to A. The direct refusal is used to maintain a symmetrical relationship among them. B's move can be seen as a direct refusal in order to achieve *kenson*. It is important to notice however, if A was to elicit a different response such as "Oh you are right, I'll get someone else", then *kenson* would have not happened in the interaction (Hall & Noguchi, 1995).

Using this same example instead to illustrate modesty, B would have showed a willingness to help her friend rather than immediately refusing her request. B would then follow the agreement with some sort of discounting of their ability (such as "I can maybe try and help,



but I don't know how good I am at writing"). However through the Japanese lens an agreement in this situation would be too eager, and therefore *kenson* could not be accomplished in the interaction (Hall & Noguchi, 1995).

This example shows how a difference in social norms can lead to misinterpretations in intercultural interaction. Misunderstanding between the two cultures occurs when each culture uses their own idea of appropriate practices in the interaction. Overall, viewing intercultural communication through as cultural discourse helps us to make sense of how individuals' understanding of appropriate practices of communication and allows us to see how these are shaped by their cultural beliefs (Hall & Noguchi, 1995). From this case study, there is evidence of the importance of cultural beliefs in intercultural communication. These beliefs constitute how we practice the act of communication in intercultural encounters.

### **Communication as a Cultural Practice**

Evaluating intercultural communication competence through a communicative lens allows us to make sense of examples of CIC study abroad students experience. By identifying the cultural meanings of "competent intercultural communication", I will be able to arrive at students' experiences engaging in such communication from their cultural perspective. Carbaugh's (1989) terms for talk framework helped to uncover these cultural meanings. Terms for talk is a way to see interactions among people on different levels in order to analyze how meaning is created within these interactions. The view of intercultural communication I have begun to outline explores communication on an interactional level. It sees communication as work people do in interactions with others and how this work happens within the interaction itself.

Terms for talk analysis is an area of research within Cultural Discourse Analysis. It suggests people communicate to accomplish things in an interaction by participating in the practice of communication. Cultural discourse is the historically transmitted expressive system of communication linked to practice of events, styles, and acts composed of specific symbols, symbolic forms, norms and their meanings. It allows the communication researcher to understand the cultural formulations of discursive practices in particular communities of speakers. (Carbaugh, 2007). Cultural Discourse Analysis argues that the importance and significance of interactions, should not be underestimated because interaction carries cultural meanings about several elements including personhood, relating and relationships, practice in terms of explicit and implicit codes, feelings and emotions, and dwellings or peoples' relationship to their physical/natural environment (Carbaugh, 2007). Messages about being, relating, acting, feeling and dwelling form a system of meanings that communicators use to make sense to one another. Uncovering messages in cultural speech is a way to see what constitutes "proper talk" in communication within a culture and to learn what it is that motivates people to practice and expect this talk.

### **Using Terms-for-Talk Framework**

To uncover these meanings attention must be paid to the level in which they occur through the use of terms for talk (Carbaugh, 1989). Terms for talk "gives perspective to a communication phenomenon by providing, in principle at least a system of concepts the interrelations among which account for cultural variation" (Carbaugh, 1989, p 113). Speakers' use of terms for talk carry levels of meaning happen as an act, event, and adhere to a style and function-level cultural interpretations. Terms for talk at the level of an act focus on what the individual is doing with words as identified and culturally coded. To elicit an act level meaning

of CIC for example, the analyst could ask someone to explain an experience in which they believed they were able to speak competently with someone from another culture. At the event level, terms for talk refer to particular types of communication as co-enactment among two or more parties involved in the communication process. This level allows us to see competent communication as it created through a medium such as a conversation, which fosters understanding between both individuals in the interaction. At the style level, terms for talk call our attention to a speaker's selection from a variety of locally recognizable and related types of communicative practices. For example, the style level can be used to ask students about how they would describe incompetent communication. Terms for incompetent communication in turn would give the analyst an understanding of what CIC is not. The last level is functional and it questions the function of the term "competent intercultural communication" and why students believe it is important. Competent communication as discussed earlier is a concept rather than standard for communication due to its accordance to the values of that particular cultural. Analyzing students' lived intercultural interactions through the meanings in their talk can help us see how students interpret CIC.

Uncovering meanings in cultural talk can be done through identification of what is done with the speech at each particular level, the distinction of the quality of each level and the relationships among them, and finally through evaluation of what the messages are in the speech and what it has to do with communication itself, society, and personhood (Carbaugh, 2008). The use of this method in study helped to uncover student's own perspectives on how "competent intercultural communication" is accomplished.

In my quest to evaluate change in views of competent intercultural communication after a study abroad experience, I used Carbaugh's method of Cultural Discourse Analysis. Terms for

talk research as an area of Cultural Discourse Analysis was used to make sense of the interviews I conducted with study abroad students. The questions I asked probed students to explain their experiences on the basis of their understanding of the term “competence”. At the end of the interview, I presented my respondents with a list of terms for talk they used during the interview in relation to “competent communication” and asked them to clarify the semantic relationship they saw between the terms they used and their idea of “competent communication.” Using study abroad students own descriptions of their experiences, I sought to discover how students come to understand the intercultural interactions they encounter as competent. This method of defining competence from a communicative perspective through the terms for talk framework provided new ways to understand how students make sense of CIC.

### **Justification**

My research is important because it opened up our understandings of CIC. By moving away from abstract measures and instead using a cultural interpretive framework to reconstruct how students understand competence based on their interactions with cultural others, we are able to develop a better way to understand and evaluate competent intercultural communication. In order to uncover how students understand competence based on their interactions with cultural others, I focused on the following research questions: 1) How do students account for, and make sense of their own competent intercultural communication? (2) What messages about cultural communication constitute how students interpret competent communication?

By focusing on these questions, I was able to foster a new way to understand competent intercultural communication through student’s accounts of their experiences abroad.

## Chapter 2: Methods

### Participants

The methods described in this section follow from my desire to reconstruct study abroad students' understanding of "competent intercultural communication." For this study I recruited students from the University of Colorado. Participants were made up of a sample population of 15 students (4 males, and 11 females) enrolled at the University of Colorado at Boulder, who had attended a semester or year-long study abroad program. The sample size of 15 students was used due to the notion of this study as qualitative. This number was large enough to elicit a diverse set of views from students. All participants were 18 years or older. Participants were recruited through a snowball sampling process by asking friends in my network for interviews and going to them to find others to be a part of my study. Below is a chart illustrating who the participants were, where they studied, and how long they spent studying abroad.

Table 2

#### *Study Abroad Participants by Name, Country, and Time Spent Abroad*

Name	Where they studied	The length of their time spent in the country
Caren L.	Athens, Greece	One semester
Fran C.	Strasbourg, France	One semester
Stacey C.	Sydney, Australia	One semester
Jeff N.	Sydney, Australia	One semester
Wendy R.	Semester at Sea	One semester
Hillary J.	Florence, Italy	Summer session-4 weeks
Rebecca K.	Granada, Spain	One semester
Sara G.	Sydney, Australia	One semester
Kylie R.	Regensburg, Germany	One year long- August 2009-August 2010
Erica F.	Florence, Italy	One semester

Mary S.	Barcelona, Spain	One semester
Brain T.	Barcelona, Spain	One semester
Coby F.	Barcelona, Spain	One semester
Mark D.	Paderno del Grappa, Italy	One semester

For my study, I obtained informed consent from each of my interviewees prior to interviewing them. Students were assured their real first or last names would not be used and had the option of withdrawing from the interview at any point.

### **Procedures**

The data I collected was obtained through in-depth interviews lasting no longer than 30 minutes. Data was based on interview questions about students' study abroad experiences and their own description of these experiences. The interviews were recorded for transcription purposes. I discussed in the previous section how TFTs (Carbaugh, 1989) was used to create an interview guide. Questions were designed to prompt students to talk about their experiences, including changes in their intercultural competence, using Carbaugh's distinction among act, event, style level and functional interpretation of "competent" communication as terms for talk.

Terms for talk is a way to frame the talk, which occurs in intercultural interactions. It identifies talk on levels. Terms for talk at the act level focuses on what individuals do with the talk that is identified and culturally coded. The event level views the communication that occurs as a co-enactment among people. At the style level, terms for talk call our attention to a speaker's selection from a variety of locally recognizable types of communicative practice. Finally the functional level focuses on the function the communication has in the interaction.

I will illustrate how I used terms for talk framework to design an interview guide with the following questions taken from the interview guide:

**Act level:** Can you give me an example of an interaction in which you believed you were able to communicate competently?

**Event level:** Describe to me a conversation or interaction you had involving someone from a separate culture in which you and that person were able to communicate competently.

**Style level:** How would you describe non-competent communication?

**Function level:** Why do you want to communicate competently with people from other cultures?

In order to avoid bias when I asked questions, about competent and other positive forms of communication (because its meaning is culturally distinct), I tried to rephrase questions involving competence by using terms used by respondents. Students seemed to have a difficult time seeing the difference between act level and event level experiences and required clarification. However I was able to explain to the interviewees the difference between the levels by emphasizing the focus of the act level on their own actions and the event level focus on the actions of both people in the encounter. At the end of the interview, I presented my respondents with a list of terms for talk they used during the interview with relation to “competent communication” and asked them to clarify the semantic relationship they saw between these terms and “competent communication.”

### **Analyzing Data**

Data collected from interviewee’s responses and descriptions of their experiences were first transcribed at the word level for analysis.

The transcribed accounts were then used to identify and highlight TFTs. Next these terms for talk were categorized according to whether they referred to act, event, or style level

interpretations. When placing each TFT into a level, I tried to listen closely to how my interviewees use these terms for talk in order try to privilege what they are saying over how I personally, would make sense of these TFTs. A direct quote was placed next to each TFT to highlight how the term was used to speak about students' understanding of CIC. After creating the table of TFTs I went back to the data, to see what these various levels of the interpretation of the term say about communication, sociality and personhood.



### Chapter 3: Analysis

The purpose of conducting 15 interviews with study abroad students, was to reconstruct students' experiences abroad and their understandings of competent intercultural communication (CIC). I should note my analysis is based on accounts of student's experiences. I did not have a chance to observe how these students actually conducted their intercultural interactions.

For purposes of analysis, students' accounts of their experiences were used to highlight the TFTs students used to speak about CIC. In order provide a better context of students' talk about their experiences, below are two examples of students' full accounts of their interactions with competent and non-competent communication.

Competent communication- Sarah G. speaks about an experience while she was studying in Sydney Australia and how competent communication was accomplished in the interaction-

*"As I toured Australia, I had several Australian tour guides that I developed strong bonds with. We spoke the same language of English, but **we still had much to teach each other about lifestyles. Our engagement consisted of respect and interest in what the other had to say and how we grew up differently.**"*

Non-competent communication: Below is an account from Wendy R. recalling an experience in which non-competent communication occurred while she was on Semester at Sea-

*"An example off the top of my head of an intercultural interaction was while I was in India women there are supposed to cover their knees and shoulders at all times. If a woman was to bare her knees and shoulders, it was seen as disrespectful. While I was in India, it was extremely hot and humid and I tried my best to cover up my shoulders and knees. One day I wore a tank top, a longer skirt, and a light scarf to go around my shoulders. At some points that day I would notice a few strange looks from the Indians as I walked around with fellow Americans, they were not only surprised to see people with blonde a hair, but also bare shoulders if the scarf I had draped across my shoulder had slipped or for some girls who bared the shoulders all day. **When not properly cover up, people were less likely to stop and help a tourist. This put a damper on some attempts to engage locals for questions and intercultural interactions.**"*

Interviewees' responses were used as data to identify specific Terms for Talk (TFTs) the students used in their explanations of their experiences with CIC. A chart was created with TFTs to illustrate how the term was used in the student's responses to questions about CIC. The chart

was separated into two categories, containing quotes about competent communication and non-competent communication. The TFTs were then categorized according to act, event, and style level interpretations. Placing the TFTs into specific levels allowed for the talk to be further analyzed, according how the talk was produced and used in students' experiences with cultural others. I was able to identify a total of 25 terms, which referred to CIC.

A total of 11 TFTs represented act-level interpretations of CIC. These TFTs were used when students were asked to talk about their ideas of CIC based on the experiences they had with cultural others. At the event level 8 TFTs were used and at the style level there were 6 TFTs used by students to describe their experiences with CIC. Style level TFTs were found by prompting students to talk about how they would describe non-competent communication. This method was used to see how students selected TFTs from a variety of locally recognizable types of communicative practice. Style level TFTs "provide a sense of spoken enactment (act or event) as a selection of one rather than others." Therefore I obtained style level TFTs by looking at the act and event level terms students used in their descriptions of non-competent communication. In this way I was able to identify what was **not** students' understandings of competent talk. My results revealed these students felt CIC was **not** *frustrated talk, impatient talk, angry communication, ineffectively conveying intention, talk rooted in different cultures or conversations with closed off minds*.

Below is a chart of these TFT about CIC and the direct quotes from students in which these terms were identified:

Table 3

*TFTs about CIC on the Act, Event, and Style Level*

Act	Event	Style
1. Saying: “It is even better when you understand the reasons why they are <b>saying</b> what they are saying or doing what they are doing.”	1.Discuss freely and competently: “the mutual patience and willingness to learn made it possible for both of us to <b>discuss things freely and competently</b> .”	1. Upset/Frustrated talk: “walking away from a conversation being upset or <b>frustrated</b> at how the communication may have failed to get the intended question and answer across.”
2. Speak the language: “I feel that communication with local's is really important and trying to <b>speak the language</b> and adapt to their culture makes it a positive interaction”	2.Open dialogue: “interaction through an <b>open dialogue</b> , and agreeing to disagree, as well as showing interest in another cultures' way of life.”	2.Ineffectively conveying intention: “neither speaker is able to <b>effectively convey</b> what they intend to;”
3.Correct use of words: “ability to effectively describe your ideas with the <b>correct use of words</b> .”	3.Conversations: “but through spending so much time together, and having weakly meals and drinks together in which we had <b>conversations</b> about school or the news, we were able to bridge the communication gap.”	3.Angry Communication: “ <b>Angry communication</b> with a lot of had movements and frustration”
4.Describe: “ability to effectively <b>describe</b> your ideas with other words when the correct vocabulary is not known”	4.Enagament: “when the <b>engagement</b> is mutual and reasonable.”	4.Impatient Communication: “misinterpret a conversation or get frustrated with the person; not having the patience to <b>work through the communication difficulties</b> ”
5.Using other words: “I could describe my ideas by <b>using other words</b> when the correct vocabulary was not known.”	5.Talking at dinner: “ <b>Talking at dinner</b> with my host brother about soccer as a way to relate and understand one another. We were able to teach one another about football in our own countries”	5.Talk rooted in different cultures-“completely different or discussing topics that have <b>no roots in that culture</b> .”
6.Asking questions: “being patient and open and <b>asking questions</b> in	6.Postive interactions:	6.Conversations with a closed off mind -“engage in a <b>conversation with closed-off minds</b> , and unwillingness to adjust to the opposing individuals' thoughts or

<p>order to understand.”</p> <p>7.Saying little phrases: “I would even try and <b>say little phrases</b> in French. If I felt they couldn’t understand me.”</p> <p>8. Effectively communicate: “complete understanding of each other—the only way to <b>effectively communicate</b> is to learn from one another.”</p> <p>9.Talk with locals: “If a woman was to bare her knees and shoulders, it was seen as disrespectful. While I was in India, it was extremely hot and humid and I tried my best to cover up my shoulders and knees. One day I wore a tank top, a longer skirt, and a light scarf to go around my shoulders. This made me more open to <b>talk with locals</b> and foster a better understanding of how I could communicate with them.”</p> <p>10. Working through communication difficulties: “having the patience to work through the <b>communication difficulties</b>.”</p> <p>11. Positive talk: “staying optimistic, not getting frustrated, and smiling can make the <b>talk</b></p>	<p>“I feel that communication with local's is really important and trying to speak the language and adapt to their culture makes it a <b>positive interaction</b>.”</p> <p>7.Effectively communicate: “complete understanding of each other—the only way to <b>effectively communicate</b> is to learn from one another.”</p> <p>8. Mixed languages: “Neither of us spoke much of <b>the same language but we were able to speak a little of English and Italian in order to understand one another</b>.”</p> <p>9. Small talk: “Neither person I encountered spoke much English. Yet we had some little <b>small talk</b>.”</p>	<p>beliefs.”</p>
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<b>positive</b> , even if the end result is not what you wanted to achieve”		
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Organizing students' TFTs into three levels was important for achieving a full picture of their experiences in competent interactions. The act level allowed the researcher to see CIC happening when individuals are performing the action. At this level we can see how students understand competence as created due to the speech action of one person. The event level highlighted how competence happened when people work together and both benefit from the interaction. It gave us insight into how students foster understanding when the interaction involves more than one person. The style level revealed the cultural implications and ideas about communicative practices that governed how students took action in order to foster understanding in intercultural interactions. Placing students' accounts into three categories gave a more detailed and whole view of different ways in which students see competence occurring in their interactions. It was to get students to talk about a full range of their experiences that was not confined to measures or shaped by assumptions about the act of communication.

After organizing TFTs on different levels these terms were used in order to identify salient messages in the TFTs. There are three types of salient cultural messages that are carried with each TFTs. The first is about messages about communication itself, the second refers to messages about sociality, social relations, and institutions, and the third type of message is about personhood. Messages about communication itself referred to the aspects of CIC as a culturally defined type of communicative practice. Messages about sociality showed how indirect talk takes places as elements of the social scene surrounding these interactions and experiences with cultural others. The last messages about personhood describe how modes of talk about CIC implied types of persons and their relationship to the group (Carbaugh, 1989).

Analysis of the collected accounts from study abroad students revealed messages about communication itself focus the mode (directness or indirectness) of communication, the relative degree of structuring that mattered in achieving CIC, the tone or emotional charge of the talk used, and students' interpretations of the efficacy of CIC (Carbaugh, 1989).

### **Messages about Communication Itself: Importance of Efficacy in Interpretations of Competent Intercultural Communication**

After looking at the data taken from interviewees' examples of experiences with CIC, it seemed that they talked little about the mode of communication used in these interactions. The direct or indirect nature of speech in students' talk in their interactions with cultural others was not really relevant in the way they spoke about their understanding of CIC. The degree, to which CIC was structured, however was frequently referred to by students. TFTs used to achieve the act-level interpretations such as *correct use of words*, *asking questions*, *effectively communicating*, and *working through communication difficulties* all pointed to the idea of adhering to some type of structure in order to accomplish CIC. The degree of structuring used in the talk however did not need to be high but it did matter for the study abroad students. CIC students suggested, could not be completely spontaneous, but did not follow a rigid structure either. TFTs such as *correct use of words* and *asking questions* were used as structural talk whose function, allowed the students to develop CIC. For example students talked about staying positive, showing interest and making the effort as a way to *effectively communication*, *ask questions*, and *adhere to the correct use of words* that allowed them to accomplish CIC. In this way, students' interpretation of CIC reflected Katriel and Philipsen (1981) idea of understanding communication as skill and work. The study abroad students responses reflected this idea of working on being patient and staying positive in order to become competent intercultural

communicators. By adhering to a certain degree of structure they were able to achieve CIC.

Efficaciousness of communication as action in CIC was important for the study abroad students as seen in the TFTs they used to speak about it. The idea of communication as skill and work was also apparent in the way these students understood and talked about CIC. As students used TFTs on both the act and event levels, important messages of efficaciousness were carried within these terms. Students' responses revealed particular outcomes associated with each TFT. In describing their ideas of CIC the TFTs of *Discussing freely and competently, effectively communicating*, and *working through communication difficulties* were all referenced along with modes of talk such as *learning from each other, bridging the communication gap*, and *making the effort*. Therefore students' understanding of CIC was marked by messages of adhering to particular outcomes as the most useful way of creating competent interaction. Study abroad students therefore felt the only way to effectively communicate with cultural others was by adhering to efficacy by allowing themselves to learn from both themselves and the cultural other.

### **Messages about Sociality: Highlighting Difference Rather than Similarities**

As the study abroad students used TFTs to describe their understandings of CIC they were indirectly referring to ideas about the native's society, their relations among each other, and institutions. These messages all referred to elements of the social scene in their intercultural interactions with cultural others. The TFTs that students used to talk about competent communication, reflected the idea of separating themselves from cultural others by understanding themselves as separate and different from the natives' society. By making this distinction study abroad students allowed themselves to think about cultural others as fundamentally different from themselves. This gave the students a way to understand one another by highlighting differences rather than trying to see the similarities among one another.

In this way CIC was understood through the differences each culture had and allowing themselves to understand these differences. Highlighting differences can be seen in the way study abroad student Wendy R., talks about her encounters with locals:

*“Well in most of the countries I visited, when a local saw a white person, they assumed or straight up asked if I was American. Once people knew my friends and I were indeed from America, they were quick to judge you. To most people being from America makes you wealthy, rude, and selfish. Some I did not want to reinforce any of the stereotypes, so I tried to always stay polite while communicating with others.”*

I couldn't help but notice when looking at messages that indirectly referred to ideas about the institutions in which the study abroad students were a part of, such as their home universities, formal training prior to studying abroad was not important for being a competent intercultural communicator. Instead students understood the way achieve CIC was by having direct interactions and experiences with cultural others. In my discussion I will use this finding as a way to critique scholars' understandings of ICC to make a claim for CIC as a better way to understand competent communication.

### **Messages about Personhood: The Idea of the Open Self vs. the Closed Self in CIC**

Messages about personhood fall into three different levels. They are the cultural level, the social level, and the content level. The cultural level speaks to the common premises about personhood as expressed in patterns of speech according to a person's culture. The social level reveals messages about the types of persons associated with cultural TFTs they use to speak about CIC. At the content level cultural TFTs show a kind of talk used when persons are talked about as the main topics of discussion. “Talk, so identified, makes messages about personhood, preferred and dispreferred qualities, toward and untoward conduct, it's basic theme. All three levels suggest an intimate link between cultural terms for talk and models of personhood. They



constitute cultural premises for being a person that are expressed through such terms for talk”  
(Carbaugh, 1989, p. 11).

Messages about personhood in the TFTs, reconstructed an overall cultural interpretation of CIC. Students’ talk about CIC reflected the cultural ideas about focusing on the self as a way to achieve competency in interactions with cultural others. Students’ talk about the self seemed to reflect an idea of the self as an assessment or evaluation. They used the self in terms of looking at their idea of themselves in relation to their competency in interactions. The open self versus the closed self seemed to be a common theme as a salient message in the TFT about both competent and non-competent communication. The theme of an open self versus a close self reveals messages about personhood on the cultural, social and context level. On the cultural level TFTs revealed again the notion of the American standard of positive is based around the idea of communication as skill and work (Katriel & Philipsen, 1981). This quote from a interviewee’s idea of an experience that involved event level competent communication, provides an example of belief about communication as skill and work:

*“I took weekly marble carving classes in the evenings with three other American students and six or seven older Greek men and women. Because of the age gap most of them didn’t speak English, but through spending so much time together, and having weekly meals and drinks together we were able to work on understanding each other and were able to bridge the communication gap.”*

Spending time together and having weekly meals was a way this student worked on developing understanding and improving her self as a competent communicator by obtaining the skill of *“being able to bridge the communication gap.”* Even though the student did not explicitly use the terms of the open and closed self, her talk carried with it a message about the importance of being both open to, and working on the self in order to accomplish CIC. In this way,

interviewee's responses reflected cultural interpretations of CIC by associating competent communication with the open self and non-competent communication with the closed self.

On the social level the theme of the open self versus the close self was apparent in the way students associated TFTs about CIC with the idea of entering intercultural interactions with an open self. Accounts of six separate responses from interviewees directly referred to the open self when explaining their experiences with CIC:

- *“Patience, willingness, and effort (on both parts) can make any interaction positive”*
- *“The mutual patience and willingness to learn made it possible for both of us to discuss things freely and completely”*
- *“...staying optimistic, not getting frustrated and smiling can make the situation stay positive even if the end result is not what you wanted to achieve.”*
- *“...interaction through an open dialogue and agreeing to disagree as well as showing interest in another culture's way of life.”*
- *“Being patient and open and asking questions in order to understand”*

Students' talk also reflected the idea of the closed self as fostering a non-competent interaction:

- *“Angry communication with a lot of had movements and frustration”*
- *“...engage in a conversation with closed-off minds, and unwillingness to adjust to the opposing individuals' thoughts or beliefs.”*
- *“...misinterpreting a conversation or get frustrated with the person; not having the patience to work through the communication difficulties.”*
- *“...if you get frustrated and give up on trying to communicate.”*
- *“...walking away from a conversation being upset or frustrated at how the communication may have failed to get the intended question and answer across. “*

Overall these quotes reveal important messages about personhood through students' understandings of CIC. Again even though the students did not explicitly use the terms "open and closed self", their accounts point to the importance of self and being open as vital to fostering CIC. Students' responses also reveal the contrast of non-competent communication as associated with being closed off and not aware of the self while trying to accomplish mutually of understanding in an intercultural interaction.

Messages about personhood on the content level again reflected the common theme of the open self vs. closed self. The TFTs used by students about CIC revealed messages about persons as the main topics of discussion. Direct quotes from students such as "*Understanding between two cultural separate persons happens when you make an effort to try and understand and be willing to work with them*", and "*Competency happens when the engagement is mutual and reasonable*" placed the study abroad students as responsible for creating understanding of differences and being open to them in order to achieve CIC. Identifying the "open self" as a main theme in study abroad students' interpretations of CIC gives us insight about common nature of openness needed to create an interaction that produces understanding from both parties.

### **Chapter 4: Discussion**

Studying abroad is a choice for students. When students decide to study abroad they need motivation and a reason for living in a different country. Through the use of TFTs in my analysis and findings about messages in these TFTs, the reason students want to study abroad is to work on their selves through the use of communication in actual lived experiences. Therefore, CIC is more about experiences that allow a person to open their self to understanding through the work they do in communication with others. According to my findings, a competent communicator is defined by study abroad students as a person who communicates to work on the self as done through working on communication with others who belong to a different culture. It is not about accomplishing particular goals and skills by adhering to three domains, as past scholars pay attention to in their scale measurements. Students do not make the choice to study abroad because they simply want to acquire specific skills such as being globally minded or intercultural proficient as assumed by asking students to confine their competency to measurable domains. Scale measures assume students want to acquire skills that can be used in the future for their own individual reasons, when instead these students seek experience and be open to differences through working on their communication with others to ultimately work on themselves.

ICC is marked by assumptions about the communication process and confines students' understandings of their competency in terms of accomplishing goals. Measuring competency based on how scholars define ICC assumes the communication process will always work by placing the focus on the individual. If a student is able to adhere to the three domains of ICC and understanding ICC through scholars' definition, it is assumed that competency will occur. By asking students to evaluate their experiences through particular ideals, it is implied that students have the understandings of what constitutes ICC and leaves no room for experiences that fall

outside of these measures. Yet by taking a different approach and listening to students' accounts of their own experiences, we see how understandings of CIC can differ. Attention to cultural discourse in my research revealed how sense making for these students about their understandings of CIC had to do with influences from their society, personhood, and the communication itself.

The common theme of the open versus closed self in students' talk about CIC provided a new understanding of CIC based on experiences. When students spoke about their experiences much of their talk carried messages about personhood as a way to produce CIC. Students seemed to see competence occurring in interactions when they were able to use communication to work on themselves to become open to differences. As mentioned in the analysis, I noticed students moved away from institutional formal training and skills as a way to foster competent communication. They instead spoke to becoming a better communicator by having actual experiences in which they were able to open themselves to learning and understanding others. Similarly students talked about CIC in relation to wanting to become competent communicators to gain new perspectives and be open to them. The following quote from Mark D. exemplifies the idea of wanting to become competent in order to work on the self to gain new perspectives:

*"In my experiences, I realized that the reason I wanted to have competent interactions was really about understanding others. Because the knowledge you can gain from people of different backgrounds can be interesting, eye-opening, and insightful why wouldn't you want to have a conversation with them? Learning about other cultures is important because it gives you perspective on the world and not just the world you live in."*

Another student also reflected this idea through her openness to learning Italian even though she knew none before she went abroad:

*"For me, the only way to actually immerse in the culture was by learning the language and learning how Italian people communicate to each other, so I would then be able to speak and interact with them. Once I started becoming better at Italian, I started using it to order my meals*

*and the waiters would complement me on my effort (good or bad) because they were happy that I actually tried to speak their language."*

Overall the messages about personhood within students' talk revealed the idea of fostering an open self in interactions. In this way, students believed competent interactions happened when they were able to use communication to work on themselves in order to enter into these encounters with an open mind.

### **Implications**

When students return from studying abroad all of them seem to be glowing and explain their experiences as meaningful and enjoyable. Even if students did not experience joy throughout the entire time they were abroad, they seem to look back at the overall experience as exceeding their expectations. Through interviewing study abroad students' by asking about their understandings of CIC based on their actual experiences, I found their accounts to carry with them important messages about personhood. Messages about personhood revealed how students' study abroad in order to work on the self by communicating with cultural others in order to be open to differences.

After taking a different approach to look at competency by moving away from abstract measures and instead looking at study abroad students' experiences as a problematic non-transparent process based on cultural practices of communication, we can see the need to understand CIC by through a holistic view. Although scales measures can accurately represent ICC they cannot represent students' lived experiences, which I found are essential to get a holistic understanding of CIC. The ICC scales form evaluations of students' competency around increasing their global mindedness in order obtain the skill of intercultural proficiency. Global mindedness is confined to measurable terms of responsibility, global centrism, and

interconnectivity for students to “be able to work with others and exhibit crucial business success factors.” It places the emphasis on how students want to achieve competency in order to obtain the skill of being open to diversity, which can be used when they are entering a profession. This limits our understandings of competency in terms of acquiring skills for personal use and benefit. It does not get at areas of growth, which occur beyond intercultural proficiency. Through my research however I have found students do not study abroad because they use to obtain the skill of intercultural proficiency. Instead these students study abroad because they want to work on the self through communication in their experiences to be open to differences. Students seek to work with others who are different from them to come together and create understanding through their talk and interactions. Asking students to speak about their actual experiences allows us to go beyond acquiring skills or adhering to particular methods to see how studying abroad helps students become more open and aware of differences.

In order to understand CIC, we must get reports from actual students experiences that get at changes in personality and their perspectives. By asking questions about students’ changes in the self we can have better insight on how CIC happens and is understood by study abroad students. Studying abroad helps students to be open-minded. Students’ talk revealed the importance of the open self in creating competent interactions. If students are aware of the way studying abroad helps them to work on the self, they will be able to go into interactions with an open mind and gain insight into new perspectives. The exposure to new ideas and views will be useful for them in ways that go beyond obtaining skills for individual benefit. Instead work on the self through communicating with cultural others, will give students a way to be open to and create understandings among the differences they encounter in the world.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Schedule

1. Where and when did you study abroad and for how long were you living there?
2. What do you think makes communication in any interaction **competent** or positive? Please explain your experiences with this while abroad.
3. Act level: Can you give me an example of an intercultural interaction in which you believed you were able to communicate competently?
4. Event level: Describe to me a conversation or interaction you had involving someone from a separate culture in which you and that person were able to communicate competently.
5. Style level: How would you describe non-competent communication?
6. Function level: Why do you want to communicate competently with people from other cultures? Why do you think this is important?
7. These are some of the terms you used when describing your experience of competent communication. Do you think these terms demonstrate and relate your experience with competent communication?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

**Appendix B**

**IRB Approval**



University of Colorado  
Boulder

Institutional Review Board  
563 UCB  
Boulder, CO 80309  
Phone: 303.735.3702  
Fax: 303.735.5185  
FWA: 00003492

15-Feb-2011

**Exempt Certification**

Smith, Elyssa  
Protocol #: 10-0350  
Title: Intercultural Communication Competence and Study Abroad experiences

Dear Elyssa Smith,

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed this protocol and determined it to be of exempt status in accordance with Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46.101(b). If you make any changes to your research or a reportable event occurs, the IRB must be notified. Please note that changes to this protocol may disqualify it from exempt status. It is your responsibility to notify the IRB prior to implementing any changes. You must use the IRB approved informed consent form or script when obtaining consent from subjects participating in this protocol. The IRB approved documents are available in the attachments folder of your protocol in eRA.

Certification Date: 15-Feb-2011  
Exempt Category: 2  
Documents Approved: Protocol; Informed Consent; Interview Questions; Initial Application - eForm v2;  
Number of subjects approved:20

You will be contacted within three years from the date of this letter to complete and submit a Continuing Review eForm. Should you complete this study prior to the end of the three years (14-Feb-2014), you must submit a Study Closure eForm through eRA.

The IRB has reviewed this protocol in accordance with federal regulations, university policies and ethical standards for the protection of human subjects. In accordance with federal regulation at 45 CFR 46.112, research that has been approved by the IRB may be subject to further appropriate review and approval or disapproval by officials of the institution. The investigator is responsible for knowing and complying with all applicable research regulations and policies including, but not limited to, Environmental Health and Safety, Scientific Advisory and Review Committee, Clinical and Translational Research Center, and Wardenburg Health Center and Pharmacy policies.

Please contact the IRB office at 303-735-3702 if you have any questions about this letter or about IRB procedures.

Vena Dunne, Ph.D.  
IRB Manager  
Institutional Review Board